

Case Number:	CM14-0217288		
Date Assigned:	01/07/2015	Date of Injury:	03/13/2012
Decision Date:	05/01/2015	UR Denial Date:	12/02/2014
Priority:	Standard	Application Received:	12/29/2014

HOW THE IMR FINAL DETERMINATION WAS MADE

MAXIMUS Federal Services sent the complete case file to an expert reviewer. He/she has no affiliation with the employer, employee, providers or the claims administrator. He/she has been in active clinical practice for more than five years and is currently working at least 24 hours a week in active practice. The expert reviewer was selected based on his/her clinical experience, education, background, and expertise in the same or similar specialties that evaluate and/or treat the medical condition and disputed items/Service. He/she is familiar with governing laws and regulations, including the strength of evidence hierarchy that applies to Independent Medical Review determinations.

The Expert Reviewer has the following credentials:

State(s) of Licensure: California

Certification(s)/Specialty: Chiropractor, Oriental Medicine

CLINICAL CASE SUMMARY

The expert reviewer developed the following clinical case summary based on a review of the case file, including all medical records:

The injured worker is a 39 year old, female, who sustained a work related injury on 3/13/12. The diagnoses have included cervical strain, cervical spine trigger points, ligament and muscle strain and spasm and cervical radiculopathy. Treatments have included acupuncture treatments, physical therapy, chiropractor visits, cervical spine MRI on 7/3/12 and medications. In the PR-2 dated 11/5/14, the injured worker complains of worsening, sharp and burning pain into cervical spine. She rates her pain a 7/10. Rest helps to ease pain. Long days at work make the pain worse. She has tenderness to palpation of cervical paraspinals and neck musculature. She has pain limiting range of motion in neck. The treatment plan is to request acupuncture treatments.

IMR ISSUES, DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

The Final Determination was based on decisions for the disputed items/services set forth below:

Acupuncture 3 times a week for 3 weeks: Upheld

Claims Administrator guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

MAXIMUS guideline: Decision based on MTUS Acupuncture Treatment Guidelines.

Decision rationale: Patient has had prior acupuncture treatment. Provider requested additional 3X3 acupuncture sessions which were non-certified by the utilization review. Requested visits exceed the quantity supported by cited guidelines. There is no assessment in the provided medical records of functional efficacy with prior acupuncture visits. Medical reports reveal little evidence of significant changes or improvement in findings, revealing a patient who has not achieved significant objective functional improvement to warrant additional treatment. Additional visits may be rendered if the patient has documented objective functional improvement. Per MTUS guidelines, Functional improvement means either a clinically significant improvement in activities of daily living or a reduction in work restrictions as measured during the history and physical exam or decrease in medication intake. Per review of evidence and guidelines, 3x3 acupuncture treatments are not medically necessary.